

# Identification on the Need of English Public Speaking Class for Students at the Tourism Destination Study Program

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## Abstract

This study aims to identify the need of English public speaking skill for students at the Tourism Destination Study Program and formulate the required solution. This study was motivated by recent student events called “Seminar Pariwisata” or Tourism Seminar where all the students had to present their projects from the Integrated Field Practicum and also “Duta Polije”, a contest where campus ambassadors were selected. This study was an aftermath evaluation following the conducted events with the hope to bring an improvement in the future for both the students and the study program. This was a descriptive-qualitative study and the data were collected through observation, documentation and interview. The results of the study show that there is a need in providing students with English public speaking skill through intensive public speaking classes, to support them especially in non-academic activities. This is also useful to equip them with additional competencies in order to help them in the workplace after graduation, especially to have a career in the tourism business. The class can be conducted during the running academic year by integrating the class with English courses, by adding the public speaking class at the speaking skill section of the RPS (Semester Teaching Plan) and BKPM (Student’s Workbook) of English courses. This idea is suggested to be taken into consideration to create a better educational supports for the students as well as for the development of the study program in the future.

*Keywords: English, events, identification, need, public speaking, students, tourism destination*

## Introduction

Higher Education is not merely a place to explore student academic skills, but it also offers a big opportunity for the students to dig more on their non-academic skills by actively following organizations, projects or events. Thus, the skills obtained after graduation are not only in the form of hard skills, but also soft skills accompanied with experiences. This is especially beneficial for vocational college students who are more oriented to applied science rather than theoretical science (Ambiani & Lufri, 2020). Gaining more experiences by joining various activities in campus will support them to shape their own vision, broaden their knowledge, sharpen their talent as well as personality and social skills to be used in the future workplace.

Campus activities are diverse and presented mostly for students. It is commonly organized through events. These events can be varied from small level conducted at each

study program to big events such as campus graduation and campus anniversary. It is also varied from academic events such as field practicum and thesis defense to non-academic events such as “Duta Polije”, a beauty pageant contest held by the campus to select a couple of student ambassadors. It can be in forms of several kinds of activities including formal activities such as ceremony, inauguration, academic competition, workshop, discussion forum including seminar and webinar, as well as informal activities such as art exhibition and leisure activities. Most of these activities involve students as major contributors as well as participants and give the students a lot of opportunities to be active and explore themselves optimally.

Politeknik Negeri Jember or well known as Polije is a vocational college that has been long established, in 1990s, and claimed several recognitions due to its supports toward student activities, including 3 awards from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology at the Merdeka Belajar Awards (Kemendikbudristek, 2023). In the matter of student events, Polije has many events that are held either per semester, annually or incidentally. Those events are conducted from the level of Study Program to campus level. Tourism Destination as one of the study programs in Polije also conducts some events including event per semester such as Integrated Field Practicum, annual event such as “Seminar Pariwisata” or Tourism Seminar, and incidental event such as local workshop and others. In these events, students of Tourism Destination Study Program have big roles in succeeding the events by joining as committee and/or participants.

In the event of “Seminar Pariwisata” or Tourism Seminar that was held on 30<sup>th</sup> May 2023, students were obligated to join the event as participants while they were also allowed to become the committee. This seminar was held following the Integrated Field Practicum activities conducted by the 1<sup>st</sup> year students (2<sup>nd</sup> semester) and the 2<sup>nd</sup> year students (4<sup>th</sup> semester) previously in early May. In the seminar, each group of students (formed prior to the practicum) were assigned to present their papers resulted from the practicum activities in front of the forum. The practicum activities covered all the courses taught in the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester and 4<sup>th</sup> semester, including Intermediate English and English for Public Relations respectively. As they were English courses, the assignments arranged in the practicum were in English and it should be delivered in English as well. Yet, due to the student incapacity to speak English well, the language used in the forum was still Indonesian or even mixed, especially for 2<sup>nd</sup> semester. Thus, the assignments could not be said as fully fulfilled.

Aside from the courses, learning to speak English well in the seminar is seen as important since it is a forum that will be developed into national and later international level after the study program develops cooperation with some partners overseas. Thus, learning an intensified English step by step especially in the matter of speaking will be useful for the students as well as for the study program in the future, especially relating to the issue of accreditation. Moreover, students recently also participated in other campus event such as “Duta Polije” or the Campus Ambassador Contest (May-June 2023) which required the mastery of English speaking skill in its process to win the crown, and a national contest such as English Speech Competition. Moreover, as the future tourism actors, students of Tourism Destination Study Program should have a good English

speaking skill to run all the matter with international tourists optimally in the later workplace (Wilson, 2023).

Hence, by considering the situation as well as the future development of the Tourism Destination Study Program, simply known as Despar, it is seen that there is a need to train the students for a good English speaking skill especially to be used in the public forum. English public speaking slowly becomes the fundamental need of college student today (Adiwinata, 2017; Angeline, 2020) as well as for students at Despar. Thus, it is necessary to give attention more on the issue. This study aims to identify the need on English public speaking skill for students at Despar to show the urgency level of the issue and then try to provide a solution that can be implemented by the study program. It is expected that this study can be considered as an evaluation as well as a reference in developing Despar in the future.

### **Methods**

This study applied a descriptive-qualitative approach to provide detail explanation on the issue as well as its solution. Data were collected during the last round of academic year 2022/2023 through observation, documentation and interview. Observation was conducted during the events of Seminar Pariwisata and Duta Polije as well as during the Integrated Field Practicum and class activities. Documentation was taken through the field instruments, the resulted group works, and speaking assignments at class. Meanwhile, interview was conducted after the events with the two grand finalists of “Duta Polije” from Despar to complete the required data. After obtaining the data, it was then analyzed and interpreted to find out the urgency level of English public speaking for students at Despar and then look for the applicable solution for the study program. Then, the final conclusion was drawn.

### **Results and Discussion**

#### ***Campus Events and Students' English Public Speaking Skill***

Students have many potentials that can be developed during their time in educational institutions. Moreover, in higher educational level, they will find a lot of opportunities to dig more not only on their academic skills but also non-academic skills. In today's society with the vast technological advancement era and various workplace challenges, non-academic skills are as important as academic skills and sharpening these skills will give a lot of advantages especially to the students' future career. One way to hone non-academic skills is by actively joining non-academic activities through campus events.

This study was motivated by recent campus events including “Seminar Pariwisata” or Tourism Seminar where all the students had to present their projects from the Integrated Field Practicum, and also “Duta Polije”, a contest where a couple of campus ambassadors were chosen. As an aftermath evaluation following the events, the observations for this study were conducted during the events and supported by other required data before and after the events. Students of the Tourism Destination Study Program participated in both events. The thing that must be noticed during the participation is that public speaking skill is a must.

Public speaking is a way for someone to make his ideas known to the public (Do & Dang, 2012). It is a process, an act and an art in delivering speeches before an audience (Nikitina, 2011). It is usually performed with preparation (Lightfoot, 2010) in a structured and planned manner that aims to inform, influence, or entertain the audience (Shyam & Joy, 2016). There are several benefits if one masters public speaking. It trains the students to think critically, gains fine-tuning verbal and non-verbal skills, and overcome fear of public speaking (Paradewari, 2017). Mastering public speaking also gives benefit for college students. They will more successful in college since they are trained to have good listening skills, think critically, write an outline, and effectively organize ideas and information which are the important skills for college success (Zulhermindra & Hadiarni, 2020). Public speaking skill can be sharpened by participating in campus events.

“Seminar Pariwisata” or Tourism Seminar is a program conducted by the Tourism Destination Study Program following the Integrated Field Practicum activities. This program is conducted as a forum for students to show and present their work during the field practicum. Seminar Pariwisata was first initiated in early 2023 and was held on 30<sup>th</sup> May 2023 at the auditorium and opened for all students and staff at the Department of Language, Communication and Tourism. There is a possibility for this event to be opened for public and larger audiences at the future as the Study Program developed. Prior to the event, all the students of Despar had to submit their works in form of abstract and power point presentation. Then during the event, two representatives from each group - that had been formed previously at the Integrated Field Practicum activities - presented their group works in front of the audiences within 10 minutes.



*Picture 1. The Tourism Seminar and the students were presenting their group work at the forum*

The group works presented were the results of the Integrated Field Practicum activities conducted on 7-13 May 2023 in Bali (for the students of 2<sup>nd</sup> semester) and in Jakarta-Bandung-Jogjakarta (for the students of 4<sup>th</sup> semester). The practicum activities covered all courses that had been learnt in the second round of academic year 2022/2023. There were two English courses involved, including Intermediate English for 2<sup>nd</sup> semester and English for Public Relations for 4<sup>th</sup> semester. The assignments given to the students to be conducted at the field practicum were in English, and the work resulted as well as the presentation were supposed to be delivered in English as well. However, this could not be fully accomplished due to some reasons. First, for the students of 2<sup>nd</sup> semester, they still had no enough competence and experience in using English language both in writing and

speaking. Thus, it was difficult for them to apply English in their work and presentation. Hence, they used Indonesian in almost all aspects. On the other hand, students of 4<sup>th</sup> semester already had the capability to use English in both manners, despite some lacking aspects. They used English in both writing and speaking manners. However, as the formal language used in the seminar was Indonesian language and the audiences were all Indonesian, they mixed English with Indonesian language in the presentation.



*Picture 2. Students used both Indonesian and English in their presentation at the Seminar*

As can be seen from the pictures, the seminar required the students to present their work publicly in front of the audiences in the auditorium consisting of fellow students and lecturers at the same department. There were over 100 people inside. Thus, in this event, their public speaking skills were challenged. Based on the field observations, some students already had good public speaking skills, yet most students were not confident enough to show themselves as some of them were hiding to each other or facing the screen more often than the audiences. The best public speakers maintained proper posture, made eye contact with the audience, and moved in ways that looked natural. A good body language improves the performance and helps the audience take in and remember what the speaker say (Mufanti et al., 2017). Nevertheless, most students were still lack of this main aspect of public speaking and made the performance looked quite boring and unattractive. This shall become the attention of the study program management since Tourism Seminar have a big potential to become an annual event and to be developed with larger audiences and higher level of event that benefits the institution.

Furthermore, public speaking skills were required by the students not only in this event but also other campus events. One of the examples was the event of “Duta Polije” or Campus Ambassador Contest in which the students of the Study Program participated. The latest Duta Polije event was held in the first half of 2023 and the grand final was held on June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Based on the interview results with two grand finalists, during the quarantine, they had several classes which one of them was English public speaking class. They explained that this class was quite important since the competition allowed the contestants to use English language in the selection process. This also could be seen through the grand final event in which several questions provided were in English and supposed to be answered in English as well by the contestants. Moreover, the ability to use international language added another point for the contestants as they were seen as having more competences. In this event, Despar sent two students and, even though not becoming the winner, two of them claimed the award of “Duta Inovatif Polije” and the first runner up of “Duta Polije 2023”.



Picture 3. Activities during Duta Polije event and the representatives from Despar

Looking at the both explained events above, it can be seen that the need of public speaking skills especially English is increased. As many students enroll to the Destination Tourism Study Program, many of them may participate in various campus events and also competition in many level that require the skills. As student's achievements are important for the Study Program to develop and essential for accreditation, the management support for the students is also necessary. Moreover, aside from internal events, students may also participate in various events outside the campus, such as in national competition. As recently informed, the first runner up also competes at English Speech Contest in national level. Thus, the need to train and sharpen English public speaking skill is significant for students of the Tourism Destination Study Program as they are also need this skill for their career in the future. This need also evolves as based on class observation, their English speaking skill still requires a lot of attention as it is lacking in many aspects. Hence, this need can be answered by having an intensive training of English public speaking.

### ***English Public Speaking Class for Students of the Tourism Destination Study Program***

To improve English public speaking skills for students at the Tourism Destination Study Program especially for the sake of campus events, an exclusive training is needed. Thus, it is suggested for the Study Program to hold an English Public Speaking Class. This class can be conducted every semester and included in the English courses in the running academic year. Indeed, the level should be measured based on the competence required by the students of each semester and based on the possible events held in the campus that year. This class needs to be integrated in the RPS (Semester Teaching Plan) as well as BKPM (Student's Workbook) of the Tourism Destination.

As English have four skills that must be acquired by the students including listening, reading, speaking and writing skills, public speaking can be substituted into the speaking skill section. This section can be implemented at least twice, before and after the midterm with different discussion topics. The materials that can be provided in the public speaking section including tips and trick in English speaking, tips and trick in public speaking, enrichment of vocabularies, and discussion of several topics that related to tourism and the world today. Public speaking materials can be delivered through various activities in class such as speech, storytelling, mini talk show, debate forum, news report/

news anchor, master of ceremony/ MC, journalist/ reporter, business presentation, and etc. that fits the student's characteristic and talent.

In the English public speaking class, a guest lecturer from practitioners can be invited to fill the classes and provide public speaking training to students as well as share experiences. This will be useful for students to obtain knowledge from different point of views and purposes. This will also provide them with professional insight and let them to realize how significant English acquisition in business field today. Guest lecturers can be from a formal institution or NGO that have cooperation with the Tourism Destination Study Program, including beauty pageant foundation, tour guide agency, English training center and other best fitted institutions. Not only limited to class activities, public speaking class can also be conducted in form of field practicum to certain destinations that emphasize the use of English public speaking skills.

At last, this idea and concept is offered for the sake of the students as well as the development of the Tourism Destination Study Program years later. Giving more attention on the need of the students shall be the main priority of the Study Program. This is for the reason that the best investment for an educational institution is students. The better the students, the more developed the institution. As a new study program that established in 2021, Tourism Destination Study Program still has a lot of homework to accomplish. And one of the first step that can be taken is creating qualified alumnus with promising competences. Hence, it needs to provide supports for the students both in academic and non-academic fields, which one of the way is by providing English public speaking classes to improve the student's competence.

### **Conclusion**

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that there is a need in providing students with English public speaking class, especially to support them in non-academic field. This is also useful to equip them with additional competencies in order to help them in the workplace after graduation, especially to have a career in the tourism business. The class can be conducted during the running academic year by integrating the class with English courses. This integration can be realized through the adding of the public speaking training at the speaking skill section of the RPS and BKPM of English courses. Indeed, it requires further discussion as the study program needs to consider several related issues, including the approval from the team of lecturers composing the materials. Yet, the idea can be considered in case there is an evaluation on the teaching plan and student's workbook of English courses in the Tourism Destination Study Program in order to provide students with better educational supports and for development of the study program in the future.

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